



May 2010 Vol 1. No. 3

Coming Events

May 20

2010 SBA Small Business Awards, presented as part of the 17th Annual Enterprise Awards Luncheon. [Information HERE](#). See related story for list of AZSBDC Network winners.

May 21

YOB (Your Own Business) Fair & Resource Day - Join the AZSBDC/Maricopa SBDC, ASBA, City of Phoenix, Greater Phoenix Chamber and other top-drawer business resource partners at this (first-ever) free event from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Deer Valley Airpark. [Information HERE](#).

June 18

Greater Phoenix Chamber Business Expo Event, held at the Westin Kierland Resort in Scottsdale. Exhibitors, social media and trade show workshops, more. [Information HERE](#).

Busy First Quarter Reflects Growing Need for SBDC Services

2010 is proving to be a busy year for the AZSBDC Network. Since



Front and Center

By AZSBDC State Director
Janice C. Washington, CPA



Focused on Economic Development

The AZSBDC Network actively participated in the **96th Arizona Town Hall** meeting to promote needed economic growth and development throughout the state. **Arizona Western College SBDC Center Director Randy Nelson** and **Business Analyst Alan Pruitt**, **Cochise College SBDC Center Director Mignonne Hollis** and I worked hard to ensure that Arizona's small business community -- and its needs --- were included in the process and the summary report.

AZSBDC Network Centers are on the front line in urban and rural communities throughout the state, where our team members experience firsthand the challenges that new and growing companies (and their host communities) face. The report of the 96th Arizona Town Hall (*Building Arizona's Future: Jobs, Innovation & Competitiveness*) recognizes our involvement and impact -- and also acknowledges the need for better small business program funding and capital development.

Learn about the **Arizona Town Hall project** [HERE](#), where you can also sign up to become a corporate or individual member.



Congratulations to the team at the Maricopa SBDC, which was chosen to receive a prestigious 'Golden Bear Award' from Phoenix College. Maricopa SBDC was named the 2010 Golden Bear Champion Technology Partner for making a significant contribution to the success of Phoenix College students.

We are proud to announce the opening of our new Springerville-Eagar SBDC location, which is operated as a satellite office of the **Northland Pioneer SBDC**. The office serves southern Apache County and is staffed 20 hours a week by **Business Analyst Molly Pitts**. Molly is a graduate of the NAU School of Forestry and is the AZSBDC's only counselor designated as a Forestry Specialist. She also serves as Executive Director for the Northern Arizona Wood Products Association, which partnered with NPC to provide the matching funds needed to make the location a reality. Molly is well known in the Arizona forest industry and is currently Chair of the Governor's Forest Health



January 1:

Clients Reporting
Economic Impact: 198

Jobs Created: 261
Jobs Retained: 51
New Businesses Created: 63

Loans Obtained: 32
Value: \$9.2 million
SBA Loans Obtained: 15

Total Capital
Formation: \$12.58 million

AZSBDC Centers across Arizona are working hard to keep up with increasing demand. The results of their efforts are shown in job growth and capital investment throughout the state.

Advisory Council, consults for the Arizona State Forester in marketing and utilization issues and is a long-time member of the Society of American Foresters.

The SBA website (www.sba.gov) offers a wealth of information on how health care reform will impact small businesses. Visit the SBA information page [HERE](#). An April article on **CNNMoney.com** provided highlights of the legislation and advice for how small business owners can check to see if they qualify for program assistance. Read the CNN article [HERE](#).



The AZSBDC Network welcomes Janice Barham as its new Technology/Data Coordinator. She will assist with the Network's ongoing technology, database, data collection and research needs and assist in developing and implementing Network technology initiatives. An early priority? Enhancing web-based technology service delivery to expand online counseling and client communications throughout the Network.

Janice has more than 30 years of experience in the analysis, design and development of information systems for companies including Honeywell Large Information Systems (now BULL). Since 1990, she has served as President and Lead Developer of Business Innovations, LLC, an information systems consulting company based in Phoenix.

The AZSBDC Network is fully accredited by the **Association of Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC)**. We are committed to high quality service and continuous improvement in everything that we do.

Featured Center

Gila Community College SBDC

This Center serves a broad, mountainous area with a smart long distance outreach strategy and locations in Payson, Globe and in San Carlos, on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. **Center Director Ron Nielsen** runs the operation and counsels small business clients. **Administrative Assistant Maureen Griffin** provides support, while gaining the skills needed to become a Business Analyst.

Demand for SBDC services is up, according to Nielsen, who was an SBDC



Gila CC Payson

Center and Economic Development Director in Washington state for seven years before moving to Arizona. "Our

Client Success Story... The Loop/Taste of Chicago



A local success story was born when Tucson restaurateurs **Mark and Marcie Rusin** ended their franchise agreement with Uno's Pizzeria in 2008 and became a truly independent small business renamed **The Loop/Taste of Chicago**. Mark knew that independence would give him more freedom to change the menu, the decor and the way

that the restaurant was run and he wanted to build a business that complemented the local community.

Rusin also 'saw the handwriting on the wall'. Chicago-based Uno was struggling (the company went on to declare Chapter 11 bankruptcy in January of 2010) and franchise fees were draining cash flow and making it hard for the Tucson business to survive. Mark had worked with **MAC SBDC Business Analyst Alex Cooper** when he was preparing to purchase the Uno's franchise in 2007. At that time, Cooper helped Mark develop a business plan to facilitate funding. The Rusins asked Cooper for assistance again in 2008, when they were looking to moderate their loan payments. With Cooper's assistance, they were able to get a loan extension on their existing \$3 million SBA 504 loan and negotiate lower payments from their local lender for six months.

counseling hours started going up when the recession hit in late 2007," he noted. "We're seeing a lot of existing business owners in various stages of distress who are looking to restructure debt or otherwise determine how they can become more profitable."

Nielsen often counsels his clients remotely, using an interactive television unit that is part of the Gila Community College distance learning system. "One of the college's units is dedicated to the SBDC office in Payson," said Nielsen, who meets clients for the first time in person and also spends one day a week in Globe.

It's a true model of counseling efficiency, with Griffin sitting in on most sessions to record data in real time. "Distance counseling has really allowed us to reach out and help more business owners," he added.



Globe Campus

One of the Center's big success stories is the Hollis Theater in Globe. Nielsen, a former theater owner himself, worked with the Hollis family to develop a business plan that led to a 2010 AZSBDC Success Award for the re-opened theater.



"Every time that we are able to successfully assist a client, that's a success story for us," said Nielsen.

Nielsen can be reached at (877) 224-7232

[Learn more about Gila Community College SBDC HERE.](#)

As a result, the Rusins have been able to keep all 24 of their employees on board and are holding on, despite the economy and despite a road construction project that essentially blocked the restaurant's parking lot for 12 months. The couple is known for hosting community fundraisers at their restaurant, which is a popular spot for locals and visiting Midwesterners. They were named an **AZSBDC Success Award winner** in 2010.

Learn more about the business (and check out the menu!) at <http://thelooptasteofchicago.com>



Left to right: Mark Rusin, Marcie Rusin, MAC Executive Director Debbie Chandler, MAC SBDC Business Analyst Alex Cooper

New Programs, Initiatives and Partners

National Small Business Week is May 23 - 29. The SBA will be webcasting events from the nation's capital that week. Learn how to watch local and national events [HERE](#).



SBA ARC loans are helping small businesses focus on survival instead of just making loan payments. The program provides an interest-free, deferred payment loan of up to \$35,000 that can be used to make up to six months of principal and interest payments on qualifying loans. Learn more about the SBA program for borrowers [HERE](#) ... and for lenders [HERE](#).



Your Statewide Small Business Resource

We Have What It Takes To Succeed ... From A to Z!

We're Arizona's largest and most accessible source of assistance for small business, with 20 locations located throughout the state staffed by professional business counselors, analysts and technology specialists. Each is dedicated to providing education and support to new and expanding businesses.



Click Map to Find Your Nearest AZSBDC Location

The AZSBDC works with entrepreneurs in all industries and in all stages of business development. We work with the SBA and our host institutions and partners to promote entrepreneurship, economic sustainability and growth across Arizona. Make our team your team and let's work together to build a stronger Arizona economy!



[Request an AZSBDC Network Brochure HERE](#)

Our Partners



The AZSBDC is an Accredited Member of the ASBDC

And Our Valued Host Institutions:

[Arizona Western College](#)

[Central Arizona College](#)

[Coconino Community College](#)

[Cochise College](#)

[Eastern Arizona College](#)

[Gila Community College](#)

[Maricopa Community Colleges](#)

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